

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USUN N 05952 140400Z

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM SSMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3987

INFO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 5952

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, XF, IS

SUBJ: SEQUEL TO GA PRESIDENT THORN'S STATEMENT ON THE ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION

REF: (A) USUN 5885, (B) USUN 5919

1. PRESIDENT THORN'S STATEMENT (REFTEL A) CRITICIZING GA RES EQUATING ZIONISM WITH RACISM GENERATED A HEATED REACTION AMONG ARABS. A NUMBER OF NON-ALIGNED ALSO REACTED STRONGLY, PARTICULARLY TO THORN'S STATEMENT THAT 32 NATIONS "ABSTAINED FROM FACING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES." YESTERDAY AND THIS MORNING, WHILE THORN WAS IN WASHINGTON, NON-ALIGNED WERE CONSIDERING VARIOUS ACTIONS, AMONG THEM A BARRAGE OF CRITICAL STATEMENTS IN PLENARY UPON THORN'S RETURN, A REQUEST THAT HE RETRACT HIS STATEMENT, DEMANDS FOR APOLOGY AND EVEN A MOTION OF CENSURE. FORTUNATELY, COOLER HEADS PREVAILED. THORN, FOR HIS PART, DEALT WITH INCIPIENT CRISIS SWIFTLY AND TACTFULLY, AND A RE-OPENING OF BITTER AND DIVISIVE DEBATE ON ZIONISM WAS AVOIDED.

2. THORN ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY AT OPENING OF THIS AFTERNOON'S DEBATE (CYPRUS) IN PLENARY. TEXT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 USUN N 05952 140400Z

OF HIS STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE:

FOLLOWING UPON REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO ME BY COLLEAGUES AND BY A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS, I FEEL IT TO BE MY DUTY TO TAKE A STAND WITH REGARD TO CERTAIN STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN ISSUED IN MY NAME AND WHICH HAVE GIVEN RISE TO SOME FEELING. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL ONCE AGAIN, AND I HOPE FOR THE LAST TIME, AS I DID YESTERDAY IN A CORRECTIVE STATEMENT THAT WAS ISSUED IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDING OR ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION, THAT THESE STATEMENTS THAT I MADE BEFORE THE VOTE ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, AS WELL AS THOSE THAT I MADE AFTERWARDS, WERE MADE SOLELY IN MY CAPACITY AS A LUXEMBOURG POLITICAN. I REGRET THAT THEY WERE, UNFORTUNATELY, ISSUED AS COMING FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT. I HAVE SAID THIS, AND I REPEAT IT, FOR, WHILE I HAVE THE COURAGE OF MY CONVICTIONS, I HAVE ALSO THE COURAGE TO (ADMIT) MY MISTAKES. I REGRET IT AND, IN SO FAR AS IT IS NECESSARY, I APOLOGIZE FOR IT.

TODAY I AM SPEAKING AS PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I AM SURE THAT NO ONE IN THIS HALL WILL CONTRADICT ME IF I SAY THAT I HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED, IN THIS FORUM AND IN ALL THE OTHER BODIES OVER WHICH I HAVE PRESIDED, THAT IT WAS MY DUTY, AS PRESIDENT TO CONDUCT THE DEBATES IN AN ABSOLUTELY IMPARTIAL MANNER AND TO PERMIT THEM TO PROCEED IN THE MOST PERFECT ORDER. I BELIEVE THAT I HAVE DONE THAT SO FAR, AND I INTEND TO CARRY ON IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY IN THE FUTURE. I AM AND I SHALL REMAIN THE SERVANT OF THE ASSEMBLY. YOU WILL WELL UNDERSTAND, ME DEAR COLLEAGES, THAT, HAVING THUS DEFINED MY ROLE AS PRESIDENT, IT COULD NOT BE POSSIBLE, AND WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE, FOR ME TO REPLY, FROM THIS ROSTRUM AND IN MY CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT, TO ALL THAT MIGHT BE SAID ON THE SUBJECT OF THE STATEMENTS THAT I MADE, I REPEAT, SOLELY IN MY CAPACITY AS A POLITICIAN. WE REMAIN, GENTLEMEN, YOU AND I, POLITICANS WHO ACCEPT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.

I AM CONVINCED THAT ALL THOSE AMONG YOU, WHETHER THEY BELONG
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 USUN N 05952 140400Z

TO THIS MAJORITY OR TO THAT MINORITY, WHO HAVE ALWAYS WISHED TO BE ABLE FREELY TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS - OPINIONS THAT I HAVE ALWAYS RESPECTED AND SHALL CONTINUE TO RESPECT - WILL AFFORD ME ALSO, AS A LUXEMBOURG POLITICAN, THE RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM OF MY OPINIONS.

THAT HAVING BEEN SAID, I HOPE THAT THE ASSEMBLY WILL AT LAST BE ABLE TO RESUME, WITH THE NECESSARY CALM, THE STUDY

OF PENDING PROBLEMS, AND TO DO SO IN THE SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION AND CO-OPERATION OF WHICH I HAVE BEEN A CHAMPION THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, AND THAT WE SHALL NOW BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF IMPORTANT OUTSTANDING ISSUES. FOR MY PART, I SHALL DEVOTE MYSELF TO THAT. IN DOING SO, I SHALL HAVE NEED OF THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL DELEGATIONS.
END QUOTE.

3. THORN WAS FOLLOWED BY AMB RAMPHUL OF MAURITIUS FOR THE NON-ALIGNED, AND AMB MAKKI OF YEMEN, THIS MONTH'S CHAIRMAN OF ARAB GROUP. SAYING HE FELT HE COULD SPEAK ON BEHALF OF NON-ALIGNED, RAMPHUL TOOK NOTE OF PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT AND SAID MATTER WAS CLOSED. MAKKI SAID ASSEMBLY HAD LISTENED TO PRESIDENT'S EXPRESSION OF "EXCUSES." THE MATTER COULD BE CONSIDERED CLOSED, AND HE HOPED IT WOULD BE REFLECTED IN VERBATIM RECORDS OF MEETING.

4. COMMENT: THORN DID NOT GIVE ONE INCH ON SUBSTANCE OF HIS STATEMENT. HIS APOLOGY AND REGRETS WERE CONFINED TO ERROR OF STATEMENT'S HAVING BEEN ISSUED IN HIS NAME AS PRESIDENT OF GA, RATHER THAN, AS HE PUT IT, IN NAME OF "LUXEMBOURG POLITICIAN." ARABS ARE STILL GRUMBLING, BUT AN IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION, WHICH COULD HAVE IMPAIRED THORN'S EFFECTIVENESS AS ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT, HAS BEEN AVERTED.
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